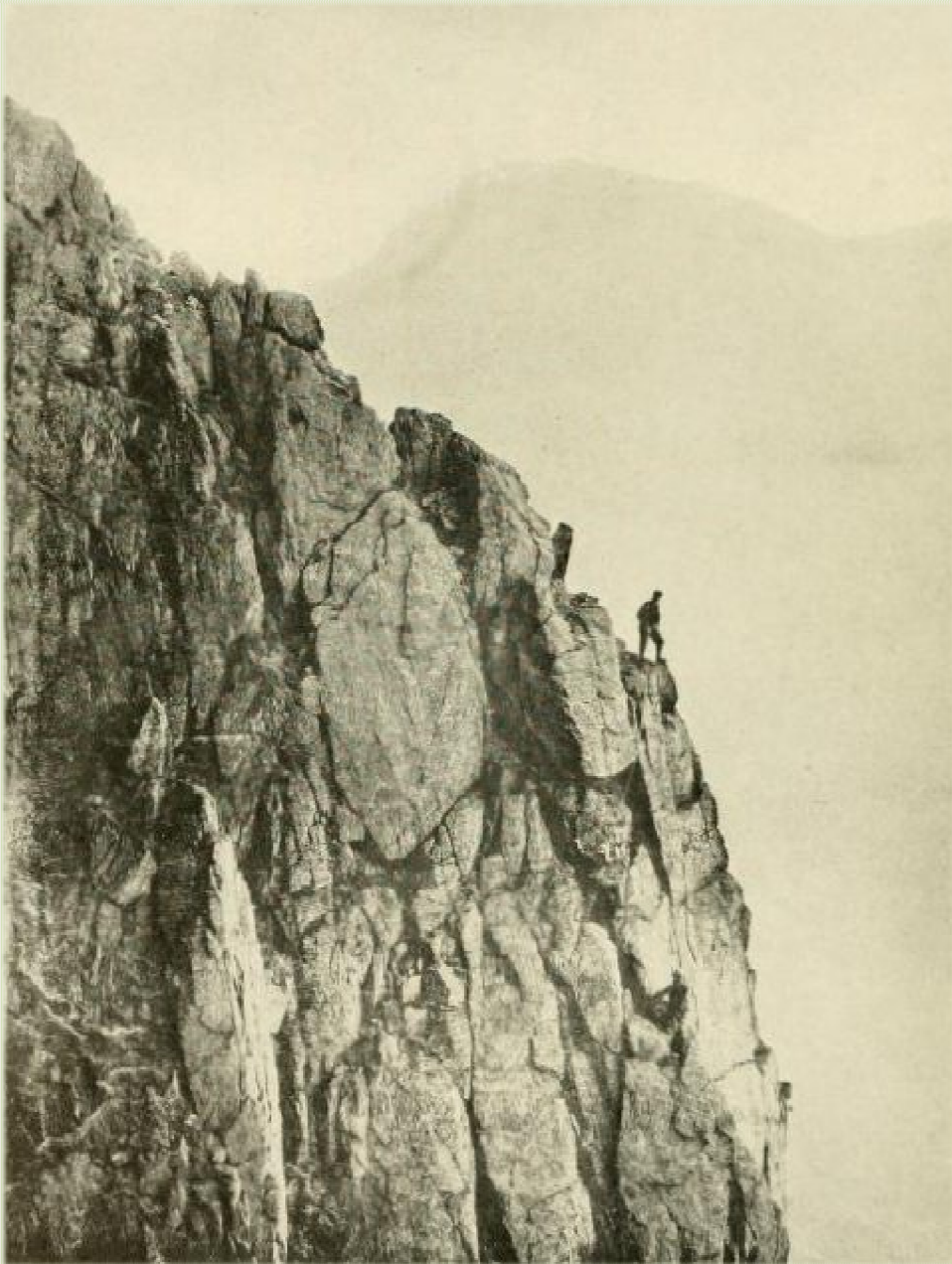


II



*a dead spot of light...*

## Some opening remarks:

Well, only one month has passed since the first edition of this magazine and as you can see the new one is already completed. Actually, it has become a neat thing for me to write on, as I am more able to deal with a greater variety bands and styles, which I am unable to cover otherwise. So, the emphasis is clearly not on the metal genre anymore; and a quick glance over the bands in this issue should make this obvious.

Furthermore, there are also plans and preparations for some essays, but except from a lot of literature at home, no step has been taken so far to get them done. The Italian Futurism and especially Luigi Russolo will be a subject of one these. To those who are not familiar with his music, I would like to recommend the following site to their attention:

[http://www.ubu.com/sound/russolo\\_1.html](http://www.ubu.com/sound/russolo_1.html)

There you can find not only some music of him, but also the writing for which he has become famous for: L'Arte dei rumori (The Art of Noises).

Well, what about this edition then? Releases, long in my possession and known by me, have finally been dealt with. I am also happy to be able to present a fair review of the O.D.I. / Akollonizer split album. Other writings on it, which I have read, are extremely short and cover by no means all facets, which the listener can discover. This is one of the aspects I do not understand: you get a promo copy and are unable to write more than a few lines. What is the point of sending them to a magazine then anyway? So, My humble attempt has a length of around four pages and I hope to give people a bit of a guideline on how to understand this release.

I hope you find this second edition of the magazine an interesting reading and any kind of feedback on it would be very much appreciated.

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## Index

Odi / Akollonizer split album	3-6
Karjalan Sissit – Tanssit on Loppu Nyt	7
7.5 – Ctrl+Alt+Canc	7
44-86292 – M.A.H. Corporation	8
44-86292 – Protocolio 37.24:Eloha	8
The infant t(h)ree – The infant t(h)ree	8
Skytree – Wilder Forest	9
SJG – Translation of a séance	9
Prydain – Avebury	10
The Hare and The Moon – The Hare and The Moon	10
Veil – Inner Child Reborn	11
Mortesium – Dream State	11
Waldgerumque – Van Dwaling En Licht	12
Dragon Mandole – Bard's tale I: "Esprits du Soleil Levant"	13
Passion for Sorrow – Demo 2009	14
Aurvandil – Ferd	14
Manipulator – Unearthed	14
 <u>Last minute arrival:</u>	
Rotorvator – Nahum	15

## **Odi / Akollonizer split album**

This split release is of a really peculiar kind. With two tracks that span over 66 minutes it is most certainly not of a common type. Just look at the track lengths: the numbers are inversed. Take a look at Akollonizer's part: it is based on Kafka's novel *The Metamorphosis*. And when you listen to the music, then a world into contrasting facets will open in front of you...

### **O.D.I. (Orquestracions Dissonants Internes) – Moon is Throll**

(Dark ambient, noise, drone; Spain)

1 Track (CD) ----- (28:37)

<http://www.myspace.com/odiritualdrone>

Of the two tracks on this album this one might appeal even to 'normal person'; someone whose focus lies on the modern chart music for instance. Compared with the Akollonizer's performance, this one is surprisingly calm and without major disruptions of the atmosphere. Over twenty-eight minutes in length and loaded with a variety of different conceptual approaches it is one of those compositions to which it is easier to listen to than to write about; especially compared with the second part of this split.

Oh well, O.D.I.'s music can (partially?) be downloaded from the Internet Archive and when you listen to the tracks made available there, and compare it with Moon is Throll, then you will recognize some amount of resemblance. Following this line of reason it would be possible to state that this one track seems like to be a re-arrangement of earlier works into some conceptually broader and more complex piece of art. Therefore, it is a bit challenging to follow O.D.I. over the whole length of the track, especially as no lyrics or any other kind of information, which could be used to shed some light on the band's intentions as well as some hints on how to understand it, were provided. The hieroglyphic writings are beyond a possible deciphering, so they are of no use to me or anyone else.

Similar to the other band of this split, also (at least?) one member of the Spanish band Entropia is involved here, but in terms of the overall style no similarity can be found. Here, no grindcore is offered, no aggressive and fast music. Rather the contrary is the case. Ambient meets drone with various additional influences would cover the basic setting. Several vocals can be found (male and female) and their style ranges from chanting over talking to whispering; some of these even give the impression of having been played backwards while arranging the track. Together with the overall quite minimalist music, with a limited amount of layers and motives at a time, it has a touch of being ritualistic; especially when vocals appear.

Guitars, keyboards, sound samples (rain for instance) and keyboards were used in order to create the music here. Especially the first of these plays an important part in creating the ambience. They give some hints towards metal, in terms of heaviness and sound, but are played so slow that it is rather some following of chords than a 'real' collection of riffs; like it is common in the metal genre. Together with the samples a deep and very atmospheric scenery is created and the vocals support this to a good deal. There is no light, there is nothing cheering, there is only this extreme density with which this track starts and which never vanishes until the end is reached. I guess, would someone be able to understand Catalane – I suspect that this would be the language used here --, then this person might be able to appreciate the performance even more. Those who are unable to understand the chants and singings will be left at the door, while others take the full trip and enjoy the art.

Whether this is track good or bad is nothing you can answer easily and I also have no definite opinion on it. In case you want to give this band a try, simply search for their music at the Internet Archive and listen to some of the fragments, from the perspective that they have been re-arranged for this release, and form your own opinion. It is interesting but also quite intense art and it needs some time to be thoroughly appreciated.

### **Akollonizer – La transformació**

(Grindcore, dark ambient, noise, drone; Spain)

1 Track (CD) ----- (37:28)

<http://akollonizer.blogspot.com/>

When it comes to music and literature, then bands like to stick to some famous poets and take phrases from their oeuvre to enrich the compositions with some fancy citations; brave ones like Ulver even took the challenge to record an entire album based on a writing by Blake; those who want to hear a quite extravagant interpretation of another Blake novel, might want to give Alan Ginsberg's interpretation of 'Songs of Innocence' a try.

But ... what is the conceptual background of Akollonizer's part?

Kafka. Or to be more precise: *The Metamorphosis*.



And to answer one question right away: No, the band did not took the writings and wrote the music around it. Rather, the story was extremely reduced but by keeping the overall intact. Judging from the translation of the texts, which I can call my own, something between an interpretation and staying true to Kafka's work seems to have been the idea behind the lyrics. One example (the language is Catalan just to make things clear); first quote.

Here, the three characters, aside from Gregor Samsa, are presented: first the father (proud, but having been harassed), then the sister (with her dreams) and finally the mother (who suffers). Yet with the last line, his own misery is presented and it continues in the next paragraph; second quote.

He has the same longings, he has also suffered and been harassed, but his own misery is downplayed and has no effect on the behaviour of the rest of the family; they, his feelings, are silenced and kept back. In case someone is familiar with this novel as well as with the language, then this person might find the condensed version of the complex social construct quite interesting. Hopefully, those who have never ever touched works of this writer will become a bit curious after having listened to this long track and might want to explore his novels or fragments; attempt to dig a little bit into the strange worlds which were created by Kafka in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

But what about the music? You can imagine that such an attempt requires at least some amount of variation and depth in order to get it right. So, a length of 37:28 is actually necessary to give each of the segments enough room.

#### **a - El Despertar (The Awakening)**

The opening is quite slow and it reflects the mood and atmosphere everyone faces after having just woken up. Also the clean vocals sound rather like it would be necessary to use a lot of energy to utter the words or in case of thinking them, to actually form the pictures and lines of reasoning. It takes a lot of self-discipline to get this done and the accordion fits so very well to the this mood. Calmness and peacefulness is created through it and the harshness of the every day's existence is still kept outside, is not part of this world; still so far away, too far away to actually want to bother with it.

Then a transition: a trumpet plays a melody and like the fanfares which announce Armageddon, they also introduce the first harsh segment.

#### **b - Traïdoria (Treachery)**

Everything changes here and it is important to know the novel to thoroughly understand what is going on. Four additional voices can be heard in the background and they refer to person involved in this early setting of the story; I do not speak the language and the booklet gives no indication on what is going on, so I am unable to shed light on their facet in the art. Anyway, it is the point after having awoken and Gregor Samsa is challenged to go to work; especially as the chief clerk appears enters the family's – and therefore also in his – home.

This is the setting and the interpretation of Akollonizer is a peculiar one. First a short glance at the lyrics; quote three.

From the first glance it should be obvious that two separate parts seem to exist and when you listen to the music. Moreover, those who are familiar with the music of the Spanish band Entropia, will recognize the vocals. These appear in a duet, which shows some resemblance to the ones used on their debut album Takte Mòrbid. It is a mixture of pig squeals and some sort of growls/croaking; the former first, then the latter (just a thought: the former the 'speaking', the latter the 'thoughts' of him?). When you look at the lyrics, then you will recognize the inner conflict that takes place in Gregor Samsa, especially as he is challenged to leave the bed and to prepare for work. To his family his voice is nothing but a sound from an animal, therefore the change in the style is only appropriate because an outside person would recognize it as such. Interestingly, no discussion with his father for instance takes place, so Akollonizer used the characteristic stylistic elements in order to get the setting right, while staying not too true to the story here.

Ah, some words on the music. The aforementioned reference to the grindcore band Entropia is true in this respect as well. Fast, aggressive and with a lot of blasts might cover the facets of this segment of the song in a proper way. Especially towards the end some industrial influences in form of a background texture appear and work as transition to the next

(1)

L'orgull del pare vexat  
Els somnis d'una germana  
I una mare patidora  
De tots ells, jo tinc cura

[...]

(2)

Però, qui pensa en mi?  
Què hi ha del meu orgull vexat?  
Què hi ha del meu patiment?  
I dels meus somnis?  
Què hi ha dels meus somnis?

(3)

Temps son Dinars / Ho tinc en compte  
Ser eficient / Ho he demostrat  
Prou distraccions / Visc per vos  
Prou esbarjo / Pas se que és  
Disciplina!!! / Pas ho dubti  
Responc per vos / Ho pot fer  
Confusió / Cóm ha estat?  
Decepció / No hi ha raó  
Desengany / Ja hi ha prou

part.

### **c - Rebuig (Rejection)**

The story continues this way: Gregor Samsa is being seen by the family as well as the chief clerk and they are disgusted by his appearance. He is rejected and forced to live in his room. You can easily imagine the reaction of him and the music expresses it in a neat way:

1; from an aggressive and quite fast style it switches towards some sludgy doomy one; slow played riffs and very minimalist drums (often nothing more than cymbals) make up the music here and create a somehow depressive atmosphere; quote four.

2; something which reflects his panic reaction towards the hatred shown by the family; some wild and chaotic as well as somehow aggressive or even brutal arrangement; this part is not far away from the grindcore genre again. Unlike the other vocals in this segment, these are more hastily and wild. You can feel how the sanity drifts of into some sort of psychosis and how Gregor is more and more unable to collect his thoughts and the understand the situation he is in; quote five.

He calms down later though and the atmosphere returns to the dark kind of growling/murmuring with which the segment started.

And when you take a look at the lyrics, then the begging for acceptance becomes obvious. The vocals are quite accurate in expressing the right mood and tension. You can really feel how he wants them – the family -- not to reject him, still to love him, still let him be part of this household. The reference to the blood (sang) and that he had always cared for them (Us vetllaré) emphasizes this further. The words are mostly expressed in a growling manner and you can feel how much energy it costs to express every phrase but also how difficult it is to understand anything of them; from the perspective of a neutral person.

### **d - Jo (I (note: not the number))**

The transition between the segments would again be of the grindcore style used in Rebuig, but it progresses here into some ritualistic/chanting like music and finally into an ambient influenced style. It is the silence before the storm, because after some minutes another blast of grindcore is unleashed and two different types of vocals (screams/growls) perform one paragraph after another; towards the end it becomes a bit more complex though. This 'brutal' music does not last for the entire length, but takes some sort of a break in the middle of the segment and is there replaced by some intense drone/ambient texture.

Unlike in the preceding part, here nothing of a fatalistic worldview is left anymore. The contrary is the case and Gregor screams out his willingness of live, how he has come at peace with his life and his new existence. He does not want to give up, he wants to continue his life; quote six

So, for the listener it is basically some sort of a rollercoaster trip. From depression over to an ecstatic feeling in a matter of minutes.

### **e - Oblit (Oblivion)**

Pride goes before a fall and Gregor falls... he falls deep. Kafka's stories have a strange kind of fatalism and deadly ending for the main protagonist and with this segment such is foreshadowed. The growls appear again, but in a quite peculiar fashion: one paragraph at a time and then a strange interlude; nearly up to the end this concept is kept up. You listen intensely but you feel the inability of the person to express himself over a longer period of time. You feel how he is getting weaker and weaker, needs his pauses and breaks and become unintelligible towards the end. Moreover, it is also necessary to point to the outré opening of Oblit: some dancing theme, which reminds me on Arabic music... (or was it Yiddish?). It is ridiculous to hear and maybe it is a reference to the family and how they are improving and getting their things – finally – right, while Gregor is suffering and dying; the roles are reversed. This is expressed through this fragment; quote seven.

(4)

El teu fill,  
Sóc el teu fill.  
Pare!!!  
Per què em mires així?  
Mare!!!!  
Res no ha canviat

Jo, Gregor!!  
El vostre fill  
Us estimaré

Jo, Gregor  
El vostre fill  
Us vetllaré

[...]

(5)

Tan sols mira'm els ulls!!!  
Soc el teu fill!!!  
Per què? Per què em tractes  
així?  
Sóc sang de la teva sang!!!!

(6)

Sóc el nou Gregor  
Sóc un ésser nou  
Decidit a tot  
Decidit a viure

(7)

Atacat pel meu pare  
Rebutjat per ma germana  
Oblidat per ma mare  
Què em queda?

Gregor has become more and more rejected and hated by the family. Moreover, as his father had thrown an apple at him, he is also injured and now suffering pains from it. He is alone, forgotten, abandoned. The hopes he had just to start a new life, to escape this prison he is living in, were merely fancy dreams and had no actual basis in reality.

#### **f - Mort (Death)**

The end. The last track. The death of Gregor Samsa. You can feel it in the music. You can hear it every second. No requiem for the dying man, no cheers or praises to lighten the burden, only a dark and sinister final act in which he has to express his feeling and torment one last time. The voice is quite low and more a growling than clear speaking and it is accompanied by minimalist keyboard motives as well as a drone texture in the background. It is up to them to set the stage and atmosphere for last words. Darkness dominates the music and in slow-motion the chords progress. You can feel the last breathe, the final sigh and the moment the life passes out of the body; quote eight.

**(8)**

Destorbo a ma família  
Destorbo a qui m'envolta  
Però tinc clar on anar  
Cal no gira volta

Tan sol una mirada de comiat  
Una mirada pel record  
Cal mirar endavant  
Decisió pel que vull, pel que sóc

És moment de marxar  
Deixar enrere el passat  
És moment d'alliberar-me  
No més patiment  
No més rebuig

Of the cheerful atmosphere, with which the story concludes, no word is expressed. The focus here lay on Gregor and his suffering.

#### **On how to perceive this kind of art:**

Well, it is quite a task to deal with Kafka alone and it is not important which of his works are being read, discussed or interpreted. They all are anything but normal and written in a weird and difficult style; I can give this statement as I have read most of his works and lectures on him while still being in school. Less than forty minutes and a separation into six segments provide a good framework for such an attempt and these are also not the aspects I have to complain about. What strikes me as weird and strange is the limitation of the emotions, which were expressed over the entire length of the track. It is a bit limited and the facets of the characters appear a bit distorted, if you like. I mean, would you not be able to understand the lyrics (from reading) or have a translation at hand, then you might mistake the screams in Rebuig (Rejection) for something utterly different. It is a bit trying and challenging to see the connection between the music and the vocals and how these would fit together. Yes, the background of some of the members are the grindcore genre and the music of Akollonizer has a strong tendency in this direction, but I find the overall attempt a bit too shallow and the interpretation should have been put on a broader basis in order to reflect the character and the novel appropriately. My impression would be that it is hard to relate any kind of emotion to one of the vocal styles; if you are unaware what is currently going on. So, in order to really grasp what happens on Akollonizer's part, you need time and energy (and maybe also a translation) in order to thoroughly understand what the band wanted to express. Nevertheless, one has to praise for their attempt to deal with such a difficult topic and I am somehow delighted to see (and hear) that someone was actually willing to deal with Kafka on a music album. So, to all those who have a fancy for experimental, aggressive and extreme music this release is recommended.

It would have been really neat to have the lyrics also in English, but apparently they were written in Catalane. In a language not many are familiar with. The band might have had their reasons, but it makes it difficult to enjoy and understand their art.

Note: The translations of the titles have been provided by the person behind the label (Artilleria Pesada), whom I want to thank not only for the free release but also for sending me this information.





## **Karjalan Sissit – Tanssit on Loppu Nyt**

(Martial-industrial, dark ambient; Sweden)

9 Tracks (CD) ----- (32:15)

<http://www.myspace.com/karjalansissit>

Hate. It is this word that comes to the mind of the listener while the air is filled with the sound of Tanssit on Loppu Nyt. Little doubt does the band leave over the course of the album in regard to this one term. It pours out of the speakers in endless streams. Be it the screams or be it the aggressive and intense music, together they create a deep impression on the person who takes the trip this Swedish band is offering.

Being not mere industrial and not limited to ambient, a combination of these two together with a dark atmosphere had been created for this album. Along with the vocals, whose performance is a key aspect in creating tension here, the percussion elements, especially the drums, lay the basis and with their very dominant sound, give the music momentum and a characteristic effect. When it comes to their sound, then they remind on bullet shots or even artillery fire. In some sense the style and they way these shots are fired, reminds on the Silent Hill Series and their soundtrack. There is this escalation of tension, this eruption of violence and hatred, which has also found their way unto this piece of art. The music was not composed in a simple or linear fashion, but rather in way that reminds on waves and how they clash on the shoreline. Like these, there is no constant brutal bombardment, like in an attack for instance, but something that needs to build up its strength now and then; only to unleash another and maybe even more powerful blow.

A bit of a contrast are the calmer and at times pure ambient tracks (2, 3, 5, 8). Even though they are not all instrumental, the voice lacks the aggressiveness which has been discussed above. Rather in the style of narrator are the lyrics expressed and it forms a neat contrast to the parts on the other side of the spectrum. Speaking of outré facets, some special attention should be shed on the last track of the album. Valkoinen Sisar is some sort of an old pop song and being placed at the very end of Tanssit on Loppu Nyt it forms a grotesk and maybe even absurd counterpoint to what the band has been performed before. No grand finale, no final torment of terror but rather an ironic wink; Nattefrost did the same on his first solo album.

This piece of art by Karjalan Sissit is intense, aggressive and extreme. It is by no means commonplace, but in its execution fascinating due to the level of the three aforementioned aspects. Tanssit on Loppu Nyt is certainly not for the faint hearted, but for those who want to dig deep into the hellish depths from which this piece of music originated. According to Napero, an admin and a guy from Finland, the title could be translated to The Dances Are Now Finished and this reflects pretty well what the music is here all about: violent bursts of disgust and hatred; nothing you could play on a 'normal' party or event.

My favourite tracks:

- Tanssit on Loppu Nyt: it begins slow, but progresses into some very intense atmospheres. Especially while listening to it for the first time, I was stunned about the performance. The screams, the drums and the density of it all is nothing but impressive.

- Viinanjuontikoulun Viimeinen Oppitunti: Miltä Lyhyt Ryyppy Tuntuu: a pretty fucked up title and the music is nothing else but strange.

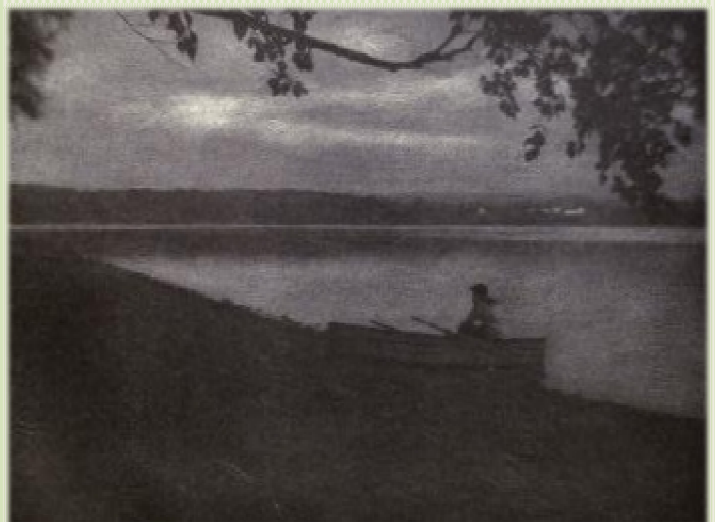
## **7.5 – Ctrl+Alt+Canc**

(Ambient, experimental; Italy)

6 tracks (CD) ----- (75:55)

<http://www.myspace.com/noexistence75>

A peculiar album. Over 70 minutes (!) in length, it offers to the listener a variety of different atmospheres and styles. While opening slowly, it later progresses into something more complex and weird. The first track is rather calm and minimalist ambient/drone, of the second one a similar statement would be impossible. Even though the basis shows some similarities, the operatic vocal parts towards the end are nothing but a surprising contrast of what has 'happened' before. Yet, with this track the transition from minimalism towards more complex arrangements – we are already at minute thirty, please keep this in mind – has begun and the succeeding composition are further steps towards some sort of drone/ambient approach. So, while the first two tracks remind a bit on wandering through a spaceship, with all these neat beeping noises and



distant sounds, what follows after these is rather like walking on a planet or in a futuristic machinery or a futuristic highway on which fast and modern vehicles pass by. At times it is a bit weird to follow the music and the motives.

Track number five might be travelling inside a modern vehicle: a throbbing sound, some occasional noise elements. Very monotonous and hypnotic, but also a bit noisy, while towards the end of this nineteen minutes track, something similar to the opening of the album in terms of the minimalism, appears again.

Towards the end – track number six – the music switches to some strange kind again. Excessive repeated motives, strange operatic parts, noise and drone elements ... somehow all that has happened before, now presumably combined into one single framework. It is chaotic in some respect, but also more reminiscent of a clear melody line. I cannot help myself, but the soundtrack to Jurassic Park comes to my mind now and then; due to the viola, which were used here; or at least something that reminds on this instrument.

So, it might be possible to state that the performance of Ctrl+Alt+Canc reminds on a trip through space or at least in some future world. The compositions are not loaded but certainly enriched with various types of noises and textures and they are quite interesting at times. Nevertheless, I doubt that they are appropriate for being listened to while reading a book; at least to me the music would contain too many disturbances at times.

### **44-86292 – M.A.H. Corporation**

(Industrial, ambient, experimental; Italy)

8 Tracks (CD) ----- (38:12)

<http://www.myspace.com/4486292>

Alright, everyone has a certain patience, but the band 44-86292 overdid it; at least from my perspective. I am able to tolerate a lot, but the track Gasmaks Syndacate is more than I can bear. No, it is beyond anything I can imagine to be listening to over a longer period of time; maybe even at all. This mixture of a children's toy melody, which excessive repeated is later combined with some weird noise arrangements is extremely hard to enjoy. It really took some effort NOT to stop the music from playing or to skip to the next composition. Maybe some socio-cultural analyst will find something interesting in the way the element had been put together, maybe it will be interpreted as a reflection of the disillusionment of the individual in modern society or as a reaction to the influence of mass media on every citizen in the Western civilization and as an attempt to parody it.

Anyway, 44-86292 combines noise with ambient as well as fragments of old films or advertisements. In a way the band reminds me on Freakflag, but more experimental and less focussed on melodies. This is more free style and therefore even harder to thoroughly enjoy. I would not go so far and state that it is bad, it simply something one really needs to get used to and approach from a broader perspective. This album really needs some time until it will be able to fascinate.

### **44-86292 – Protocolio 37.24:Eloha**

(Industrial, ambient, experimental; Italy)

8 Tracks (originally 2, but split-up into more segments for the CD) (CD) ----- (60:30)

<http://www.myspace.com/4486292>

Compared with M.A.H. Corporation this one has less complexity and is more oriented on melodies and structures. Moreover, also the aspect of noise appears on a lesser scale, while electronic beats are more dominant; one exception would be the fourth one, which is basically a noise track and shows some resemblance to Merzbow.

The term 'beats' could be misleading, because the actual style is not normal tempo/style or the sort, but rather something that wakes memories on the cybergrind genre; in terms of using a drum-computer programmed at ludicrous speed. It is not exactly like in this particular genre, but certainly not far away from it. On top of it are various types of ambient and noise elements, which vary from track to track. 1-3, 5, 7,

For me, as someone whose preferences lie in the metal region, this type of music is extremely hard to appreciate, because it is so far out of the realm of what I normally listen to. A bombardment of ideas and motives is what this album is about. Pondering beats in the background and noisy stuff on top of it...

### **The infant t(h)ree - The infant t(h)ree**

(Ambient, neo-classic, 'art music'; Italy)

8 tracks (MP3 – on netlabel) ----- (32:26)

<http://www.myspace.com/theinfantthree>

Ambient is a genre which I follow for some time now, but even though legions of bands tend to throw out masses of releases under this banner, it is a bit difficult to find music which I can thoroughly enjoy. Sometimes it is a bit too minimalist, then it has some strange arrangements, then there might be some sound effects that I do not like ... to make



a long story short, the success rate for me has been subpar so far. But then I stumbled over Cenere Muto and I found something I have not found before: spoken words over a musical basis.

Aside from a similarity of the genre, both -- Cenere Muto and The infant t(h)ree -- have also their native country in common: Italy. So, it is easier for me to deal with the music of both bands as there is some sort of a common basis. Is it possible to discover additional ones? Well, some might argue that the basic approach in terms of the music is in both examples the focus on ambient structures, but the actual execution differs between them. While Cenere Muto shows hints towards the metal, folk and post-rock genre, The Infant T(h)ree perform much calmer music with a focus on neo-classic and ambient; their music is more artistic and of a different kind. It is a bit difficult to actually grab the performance of the three musicians and sum it up neatly. The songs are quite experimental in their arrangements and the atmosphere seems to have been in the a larger focus, because the actual compositions are quite minimalist. Some vague sounds here, some textures there, but nothing really offensive or even dominant. Between the instruments and the vocals a neat and fascinating balance has been established here, which swings to and fro and creates different forms of tensions. This is what makes this release so interesting. It is the variety in and the variation of the ideas over the whole length

Calmness, sadness and the fascination of the Italian language is what gives this piece of music a special touch. It lets you dream and takes you away to a distant place. Especially the moaning of the trumpet is just so wonderful...

### **Skytree – Wilder Forest**

(IDM, ambient, samples, noise; USA)

6 tracks (3" CDr) ----- (23:11)

<http://www.myspace.com/skytree>

It is not as good as Knotwork, but it is still quite a neat piece of music. Alright, few will know these albums, but it is still worth mentioning, hm? Anyway, Skytree play IDM and of a fascinating type. There is a swiftness in the music, something light and exceedingly catchy. The music has some decent and inoffensive beats, while the foreground guitars and sound layers create a dense and fascinating atmosphere. It gives the impression of running around through the streets in the summer – feeling light, feeling easy, feeling cool – without having to sweat or the urge to run to the next ice cream parlour; Germans cannot get enough of this sweet cold stuff in those days. Similar to a town the movements in the music are not fluid, but remain abstract and fragmented. The beats show a certain tendency to be bouncy and struggle over dominance with the other elements – like guitars, ambient textures or motives. Vaguely only can voice samples be heard, but this is not a bad thing, as they might be a distracting factor; it is important not to overload compositions.

Six tracks and around 23 minutes in length are offered here, but it might take some time until the performance will really be appreciated. Unlike the other albums, which was mentioned in the opening of the review, this one has more depth and complexity. I should note that this band made me appreciate the use of samples in the music; those taken from commercials and films. Knotwork is full of these and they create such a splendid combination of rhythms and obscure voice fragments. Of Freakflag's Experiments in Evolution the same can be said.

This release comes as a 3" CD and looks simply wonderful.

### **SJG – Translations Of A Seance**

(Ambient, noise; USA)

5 Tracks (3" CDr) ----- (17:02)

<http://www.myspace.com/underworldrelativityrecs>

The challenge with noise and ambient music is to thoroughly understand what the person behind it actually wants to express. Is there a underlying idea surrounding the release or is it merely an arrangement of ideas, whose current composition is nothing but something that happened by chance?

A séance is a meeting in which you attempt to get in touch with some outer world thing. In some way it is the result of the longing of man to break out of the physical existence of their every day routine, together with the hope to find another spiritual world where one would 'turn to' (or life further) once the life on Earth has ended. A bit of this can be found on this release or better said, sounds and motives which would wake memories on horror or ghost movies. A rattling here, a hissing there ... especially Settling Nature of Obscurities offers an interesting example for this. Vague rhythms and ideas appear over the course of the track, but aside from the minimalist and melancholic music in the background nothing definite has found its way on it. Yet, this is rather the exception and the rest of the album follows a different path and is far more offensive and aggressive. Actually, this backfires a good deal, because what remains with the listener is nothing but an impression that reminds of a compilation and nothing of a red line. So, while there are some haunting moments, these are unable to last and are rather disrupted, by the vocals in Spirits of the Dead (based on an E.A. Poe poem) for instance and they leave the listener a bit bewildered about what is going on here.

Maybe someone else will have a different opinion on this, but to me it is a very ambiguous experience listening to this

album; to say the least. It should be noted though that it comes also as a neatly designed 3" CD; mine has also a sticker of the logo; which looks quite good.

### **Prydain – Avebury**

(Ambient, drone, noise; United Kingdom)

1 Track (CDr) ----- (37:02)

<http://www.myspace.com/prydainstones>

I doubt that many will know this band... I really do. Moreover, I also doubt that many understand the name and have even heard about it. Prydain ... what or who or where is it? Well, Wikipedia might not be best source, but it is one which provides at least some explanation on such an obscure term. Prydain dates back to the medieval times and refers to the island of Britain; or to be more precise: the Brittonic parts of the island; that is, the parts south of Caledonia. Welsh would be the linguistically origin of the word. Interestingly, still up today the term is in common use, but it refers to Britain and no separate part of it.

Avebury ... there the difficulties continue, but without much effort also this matter can be cleared up. It is a village in South-East England and prominent for its stone circles. So, when you look at the cover artwork now, then you will get a small impression on how it looks like there.

Well, when you combine these two aspects, then what kind of music one might expect from this? Well, it is one long composition on this release – 37 minutes – and it is of a very minimalist kind. Not like Mystified's Constant, but with its reduction to a vague dronish texture in background – basically a bit of noise, which is varied in some respect, but maintains its inoffensive tune – while in the foreground, a strange and noisy roaring appears now and then. Some additional noise elements make an appearance also, but also on a small scale. It is a bit like walking through an abandoned town, while some human artefacts make some occasional noises, vaguely reminding the lonely person of the life which once flowed through the streets of this place, inhabited the now rotten and broken buildings. It would also be appropriate for the desolation expressed by Platige Image in their short film "The Cathedral". The extraordinary reduction to the minimalism on the musical performance combined with a building which would just let you stand in awe, is nothing but a proper combination. Anyway, maybe this one long track expresses the loneliness which can be found in the stone circles in Avebury these days. Of the old culture, nothing but vague memories have remained, mere glimpses and fragments but nothing definite. The rites are no longer celebrated and only recited in tales and legends... if at all... such is also the music: no clear expression, but an eclectic of sounds and noises, wrapped together with a slowly murmuring wind in the background.

Avebury's a bit different and a bit strange, but it is music and there are times when it is possible to enjoy this slowly meandering type of art.

### **The Hare and the Moon – The Hare and the Moon**

(Folk; United Kingdom)

15 tracks (CD) ----- (48:38)

<http://www.myspace.com/thehareandthemoon>

When you live in Germany and bring up the topic of folk music in a discussion with younger people – using 'Volksmusik' the German translation of the term – then you might receive some rolling eyes and questions regarding your sanity. Oh well, thanks to the mass media channels this term has a really negative connotation around here and this might also be a reason why the translation is often avoided. Avoid getting associated with ... THEM. Them would be a certain mixture of 'Schlager' with pseudo-folk characteristics, which is generally created for the elderly and generally broadcasted on a large scale by the publicly funded television stations. So, when you hear young people speak of 'Volksmusik', then it is always folk and rarely the translation. Is not this odd?

The Hare and the Moon are a British folk band, but they do not stick to a too traditional style. Electric guitars have a place in the music as have acoustic ones; the latter are more dominant of course. Moreover, the music has not a happy and cheering touch; balladesque some might say. The lyrics have a slight depressive undertone and also the voice is unable to really create a positive vibe here; you do not get the feeling or the urge to join in with the singing. It is also not the type you would find it easy to dance to. There is an earnestness in the approach which points a bit towards shamanistic music, with their monotonous and emphasized way the in use of the drums. Or is it the vocals? Well, these are rather kept back and remind a bit on the music by the Finnish band Tenhi. Their vocalist shows also not the full scale of his voice, because he lacked a bit of self-confidence. There is hardly any real singing in The Hare and the Moon's art, unlike in the music of Triakel for instance, but rather some kind of narrating. It fits the music but makes it also a bit tiring to listen to it. Actually, when you listen to a track like The Rolling of the Stones – a rather cheerful one – then the band is unable to get this across and is stuck in their own self-limitation. Do not get me wrong, there are some nice moments on this album, but at times you get the impression that the band plays the music at half ahead.



What I do not like is synthetic elements in folk music, but such is the case here. Especially the drums are not always real – at least this is my impression – and their sound creates an odd contrast to the general performance of the band and they disrupt the atmosphere to a good deal. Seems like also the folk scene suffers from a scarcity of drummers, like a good part of the metal scene as well.

This review was written on a promo-version – when I recall it right –, so I am unable to give information on the final version (released by Reverb Worship Records); on the topic of lyrics and design for instance. Yet, according to the inlay, the texts are all traditional, but you are not provided with a source.

## **Veil – Inner Child Reborn**

(Acoustic, experimental; Luxembourg)

8 tracks (CD) ----- (38:48)

No homepage

Lacrimosa... this was the references given in the Internet auction through which I was able to obtain a copy of this quite peculiar piece of music. 1 € (plus a bit of porto) was the price I paid for it, so not much money was lost. Moreover, I always wanted to have something of a Luxembourgian band.

First of all: judging from the way the music was arranged and composed, I have a strong feeling that this was done on purpose. There is a meaning, there is something conceptual underlying this piece of art, which the persons(!) behind it attempted to express. Yes indeed, even though the booklet rather point to a single artist behind this band, more were actually involved in the process of creating and crafting it. You can hear this in the female voice in the opener – Patiently Waiting – as well in the last composition – Lac de la Lune –, which has a male vocalist. And there we have the first interesting aspect: except for these two tracks, all the other ones are instrumentals. Moreover, the female rather sings some notes but not a text, while the male rather speaks and has some lyrics. Furthermore, as it is not only difficult to understand the words and as they are expressed in a language I am not familiar with, it is impossible for me to really grasp the contents of them.

When you listen to all compositions, then the veil will not be lifted magically. Actually, it becomes more obscure. While the music itself consists mainly of minimalist acoustic guitar play – with some minor variation like reverb (To Meta Orphiam, Pacemaker) or violin play (Pacemaker) – it has some interesting reciting of earlier ideas. Some motives appear again and again over the length of the album, which gives the music a special aura as well as distracting from the actual minimalist concept behind the songs. Yes, the music is rather calm, depressive and reduced to a very basic idea: the play of a guitar. Everything drowns in melancholy and a deep sadness, but it also lets you dream and your thoughts drift away into vague parts of the consciousness, to which someone would seldom turn to. When I listened to the music for the first time, then I was utterly bored and annoyed. The art was not what I expected and I quickly turned to other albums. Yet, while writing this review, it has grown on me and I am actually able to appreciate the performance of Veil, despite the quite limited concept and overarching minimalism. Inner Child Reborn is some sort of an introspective tour. A tour into one's innermost feelings and longings. It reminds on times gone by, but also on the chance to re-live and to re-awaken some of these.

The most astounding aspect of this release might be that it actually comes professionally printed; CD and booklet! This is no cheap CDr and home-made inlay. I wonder how many copies exist of this album. With a release date in the year 1995 and an address given, there are not many chances to find out much about this band any more. Yet, it would be interesting to dig a little bit deeper into the story and mysteries behind Inner Child Reborn, especially as in the booklet an 'alliance is mentioned... So, who are/were these folks? What has their contribution to the art scene been and foremost, what has become of them? Questions over question and no answers in sight...

How appropriate the band name is: a veil hangs like a burden over this release and prevents a neutral person to thoroughly grasp what goes on behind it. Time and the right atmosphere is needed to take a few glances behind it, but most of the mystery will still be kept safe.

## **Mortesium – Dream State**

(Ambient, field recordings, noise; Sweden)

3 Tracks (MP3 – on netlabel) ----- (20:19)

<http://www.myspace.com/mortesium>

Aaaaaah, how peaceful music can be. No violent guitars, no wild screams by the vocalist and no thundering bombardment from the drummer. Just some calm drone-motives in the background, while the chirping of birds, the murmuring of water and the gentle sound of the wind surround the listener with the impression of the utmost calm- and peacefulness. The three compositions remind, due to their inoffensive style, on some sort of environment CD – you know the stuff: thunder, sea and countless other ambient/field-recording releases – for which people are supposed to pay a good amount of money in order to get some of the experience and relaxation that they are unable to receive any



longer; because they live either in a big town or are too lazy to go outside and experience nature by themselves.

This type of music can easily be enjoyed and the mixture of drone/ambient with field recordings is just splendid. Turn it on, sit back in a chair and let the soul drift a bit.

## **Waldgerumque – Van Dwaling En Licht**

(Ambient / Industrial & Noise / Drone; Netherlands)

6 Tracks (CDr) ----- (42:24)

No homepage

From the current position I am unable to give a clear statement on the status of this Dutch band. Is it still active, are they defunct or merely on a hiatus? Well, their main portal of communication, a MySpace site, is no longer in use and was deleted not too long ago. Anyway, two albums were released by them and this would be the first of them. Just to make some clarifications: the band offered their music on CD as well as a MP3 download. So, in case you stumble over the latter of them, then it is perfectly fine to use it; as long as you do not have to pay for it of course.

From aforementioned genre description it is already possible to gather some of the actual style of the music.

In order to discuss this album in the proper manner, it has to be split into two segments:

### **Tracks 1-3**

(Ambient / Drone)

The opener *Van Dwaling En Licht* clearly shows where the trip will go towards: calm and very atmospheric music, with a good sense of textures and well crafted layers. It is really music that is able to fascinate, despite some amount of minimalism in its structure. Worth noting is the aspect that Waldgerumque appears on several metal sites in the internet and was also submitted several times to the Metal Archives, only to be deleted shortly after again. For some inexplicable reason some people mistake the drone texture in opener for metal ones. It simply shows how much confusion seems to exist over what is metal and or not these days. Anyway, *Als De Ziele Luistert* and *Nooit Meer Slapen* continue with the style, while the former is more calmer, minimalist as well as less atmospheric than the latter. On the one hand we have a mixture of drone/ambient reduced to the basic elements, while on the other a quite cheering and vibrating with a positive vibe was created. The third track of this album would also be the one I enjoy most; not only from this album but from both. How the multiple layers fit together, how the field recordings fit into this and how a deep sense of utter peacefulness was created can be described as the outstanding characteristic of it. You can just sit back, relax and let your soul drift away. Numb by Nadja is still better, but Waldgerumque did a pretty neat job here.

### **Tracks 4-6**

(Ambient & Industrial & Noise / Drone)

The style as well as the atmosphere really takes a leap with the fourth track and from the nice chirping of the birds, it progresses towards some kind of intense Industrial/drone/noise type of music. Next to no transition takes place and the scenery moves from bright daylight towards a barren landscape over which the howling of lost souls and the distant sounds of industry can be heard. It is dark and dusty. It is a place to pass by rather than to stay and rest. Yet, it does not stop here, because with *Van Jouw Rol En Mijn Illusie* the journey takes the listener to even more grotesque and abominable places. Even more intense than before, with a monotonous industrial/noise motive, which is repeated endlessly, like in an machine, one finds oneself surrounded by artefacts of various kinds. First a monotonous hammering and with the last track a drone-noise texture, which gives the impression of attempting to cleanse the mind of the listener from everything that has happened before. At the end, only the noise will prevail and all the beauty, will it be from nature or the intense ones from the industry, will be gone and lost forever. Vague glimpses can still be recognized but nothing more. They have to remain in the back, unable to pass through the dense fog that makes up the front. And at the end there is silence and it appears without a warning. It breaks upon the listener like a merciless blow and pulls this person out of the environment he or she had been in for some time. No neat outro, no final absolution, just a fierce blow of silence.

Is this release worth downloading and buying by chance? Well, it depends a bit on personal preferences of course, but to me the track *Nooit Meer Slapen* was able to create a deep sense of fascination and I have turned to it again and again. Also the opener with its slight resemblance to depressive/ambient metal has some quite good moments. The second part of the release though, shows a good deal of noise influences and these might turn of a listener or two. Not only because of their intensity, but also due to the absence of all what the band did better on the first three tracks. I would not go so far and describe them as bad, but it is more difficult to get used to and to appreciate them in the same manner the other ones.

I cannot tell how many copies exist, but as mine has the number #14; at least a bottom line is known if you want.

## **Dragon Mandole – Bard's tale I: "Esprits du Soleil Levant"**

((Asian)Folk, samples; France)

11 Tracks (CD) ----- (79:54)

<http://www.myspace.com/naviremandole>

To put the music in a proper place, it is necessary as well as appropriate to start the review with a quote from the album:

*No keyboard fx or drum machine have been used, it is all "handmade".*

Ah, how sweet the sound of real instruments is. Not very long ago a band contacted me and requested a review on their first demo and judging from its sound, all of the elements in the music – aside from the vocals – were created by a computer. It is the downside of the modern age and the improvement in electronic equipment and software. Call me old-fashioned, but as I have learned to play several instruments when I was young and attended music classes till I finished secondary school (Gymnasium in German), I have a certain fancy and focus on the real thing.

Yes, the real thing and even though DM presumably manipulated their sound in process of mixing it a bit, you can clearly hear the benefits of non-computer-generated guitars and drums. To get an idea on what kind of instruments were used for this recording, you may want to visit the band's MySpace site and take a look at the photo section, because there the equipment is presented in detail. The variety is somehow astounding and might have contributed to the overall richness of the music, the neatly crafted facets and sound arrangements. Having been created over a time span of four years – 2005-2009 – Padrigh, he would be the person behind DM, crafted an album whose sound and style is pretty rare in the way it was executed. On the one hand there are hypnotic and intense rhythms, while on the other samples from anime movies were taken in order to enrich the motives as well as to lay the conceptual background for the compositions. Actually, it is a bit bewildering to listen to the songs, especially for someone whose language skills prohibit an understanding of the context of the anime parts, due to their style and sound. Yet, without a deeper knowledge of these I am unable to criticize them. In some respect I would say that they create an interesting facet and give the album some sort of identity and character. An arrogant and ignorant 'Western' would point towards them as a bit childish and obscure Japanese stuff; a country well known for its strange art.

Anyway, eleven tracks appear on Bard's tale I: "Esprits du Soleil Levant" and they range in terms of the length between less than two to more than twenty minutes. Over 79 minutes (!) is the entire debut album long, so the buyer will get quite a good amount of music for the money. And it is (or will be) worth spend indeed. Despite some slight amount of repetition in the concept and absence of variation, the atmosphere is such fascinating that it will grab you the moment you have listened to the first song. It takes you along through whatever there might come and to which level or style the music might eventually turn. Someone holds your hands and guides you through all the abysses and past obscure locations.

The idea behind DM's music is basically to create a dense structure of various elements. These shift from song to song in some respect, especially in terms of the background ambience, while additional elements give the songs identity and keep the listener's attention. Generally, guitars of play an important part in the music. In style they resemble (Asian-)folk music, which is supported by drums; these would at times be quite intense and give the music an impressive atmosphere as well as power. You can imagine that the last track, its length is more than twenty minutes, requires some amount of variation and conceptual depth and this is achieved by a neat play with the instruments. The motives switch from one to the other and this way DM is able to avoid monotony from appearing on a too large scale. It is the play with the ideas and their total amount in the compositions as well as over the entire length of the album which leave the positive impression. While listening to the music, and you can being the 'journey' on any track, you feel like you are guided through a mystical world.

I also want to write a bit of criticism here and it seems to point to a mistake not uncommon these days; I could recall a score of releases with the same flaw. Despite some well crafted art it fails to get one aspect properly done: to give the listener some time to breathe and reflect. There is simply too much going on and too few room to create some motion in the atmosphere. One idea follows the next, one riffs succeeds the other and one sample leads up to another one... you can put it succinctly this way: more spikes and less middle part. It does not need much of it, just a bit of play with the arrangements now and then. Somehow the whole concept is too calm and controlled for me. Whether or not this particular way of song-writing was intended or not is hard to tell from a neutral perspective.

Despite this aspect, I am really able to enjoy this album and take a trip now and then. It is the sound and the way the instruments were arranged that always grabbed my attention and actually never really left me. Even though it is hard to recall or recite any particular motive or idea, it is the overall style to one should point towards, when the positive aspects are mentioned. You will remember how the band created the ties with the listener and enwrapped this person into this world of fantasy. Dragon Mandole is worth a try, especially as it dares to be different.



## **Passion for Sorrow – Demo 2009**

(Death metal, gothic; Czech Republic)

4 Tracks (CD) ----- (22:41)

<http://www.myspace.com/passionforsorrow>

It all began some years ago when I contacted the band **Alone in the Dark**, because on some issues with their profile at the Metal Archives. Well, some e-mails were exchanged and I thought that the contact would rest then. Ha!, how mistaken I have been. Some time later, I cannot recall how many months, I was contacted by the former member I had been in touch with earlier and he told me about his new project: **Passion for Sorrow**. This is how everything came into being and now I have a CD from them; their first promo demo.

First of all, I really hope that bands start to get their shit right before spreading their music. How difficult can it be to avoid the basic errors and flaws? Am I talking of PoS? Of course not. Yeah, the demo is not a perfect piece of music and you can clearly hear that in terms of professionalism there is still a good room left for improvement, but this is not a big issue as the music itself is quite interesting. There are some really cool riffs on this release and this makes you ignore the short-comings in the performance. Time and energy was spent on to get this aspect right and how everything works together is by no means average or commonplace.

The Phantom comes with a really cool intro riff, or take the main one of Lost. Each of the compositions has its own character and style. Some sort of unique atmosphere and catchiness. With a mixture of death metal and gothic the band was able to create a good balance between aggressiveness and melodies. Also the croaking-like vocals work pretty well with the music and luckily the band avoided to drift into clean ones; this beauty and the beast style is often a bit weird to listen to.

Anyway, this demo is a really promising release and you can clearly hear the potential that is apparent in the band's concept and style. With a bit polishing and recorded under more professional circumstances, this output would become really interesting.

## **Aurvandil – Ferd**

(Black metal; France)

5 Tracks (CD (promo version)) ----- (42:14)

<http://www.myspace.com/passionforsorrow>

It is quite an astounding progression this band took since their first demo. Of the rehearsal room touch and poorly executed production nothing is left, also the days of slightly boring or plain music seem to have gone by. I really doubt that someone not familiar with the band's early works would actually recognize it in the latest ones. So, a lot has changed for the better.

To describe the art of this band is not easy, because Aurvandil avoids a generic approach a lot of band tend to follow when it comes to black metal. The result is often a too large amount of repetition and shallowness in the song-writing as well as the inability of the band to really grab the attention of the listener over a longer period of time. Is black metal too conservative and do bands really prefer to play it safe, with the obvious result of being merely one among a legion of other ones, instead of trying to push the limits of the genre a bit as well as establishing some sort of characteristic sound?

Ferd reminds on the early days of the Norwegian black metal scene. There is something of the symphonic branch in it, combined with the aggressiveness of Dark Funeral and some skill in terms of the song-writing. Especially the cello and the keyboard are welcome elements that enrich the music in a neat way. The music is really good and well crafted. There is even a bass in the background. Unlike a lot of other one-man bands, this one is actually able to get their stuff right and with a real drummer, who knows what might become of them. Really recommended.

## **Manipulator – Unearthed**

(Death metal; France)

8 Tracks (CD) ----- (24:21)

<http://www.myspace.com/risingfromthegrave>

Manipulator is a side-project of the person behind Aurvandil and it is again a metal one as well as a one man band. These are the similarities between them, because unlike the latter band, this one plays death metal. Old-school influenced to be correct. Here, the music is straight-forward and except for the solo parts, without any fancy or cheesy elements. Be it the sound, the track lengths or also the production, everything points towards the early days of the death metal scene. Fast, aggressive and with a lot of double-bass drums ... you get the idea. Well, the performance



is quite good and it is pretty easy to enjoy it.

The band has just signed with Soulseller Records and Unearthed will be released professionally on CD and LP later in 2010.

### **Last minute arrival:**

#### **Rotorvator – Nahum**

(Black metal, noise; Italy)  
5 Tracks (CD) ----- (27:25)

<http://www.myspace.com/rotorvatorblack>

Close before I finished this issue of the magazine another CD reached me; Rotorvator's Nahum to be precise. A first impression is of course the design and this simply gorgeous. Four printed 7" cardboard papers are also part of this release and from the outside they look like nothing but black sheets with some minor printing. From the inside though, you will not only get some basic pieces of information on the album but also some well done black/white photos; I really have a fancy for these kind of thing and I really prefer to use b/w films myself; screw digital cameras.

What about the music? Well, those who have read the first issue of the magazine will have noticed the review on Demetrius Grave's release and it would be fair to state that the art on Nahum shows some resemblance. Not so much in the structure and rhythms, but rather in the overall atmosphere and tensions. Both use a good amount of noise and distortion, both use electronic drums, both vocalists tend to scream, the black metal aspects are rather violent aggressive bursts etc. Compared with Rotorvator's debut, this one would be less noisy and has a stronger focus on the metal part. Moreover, a track like *Peace on Earth* is really good to listen at... so, the first impression is very positive and the next issue of this magazine will contain a more in depth review.

*Now the Sirens have a still more fatal weapon than their song, namely  
their silence...*

*Someone might possibly have escaped from their singing; but from their  
silence, certainly never.*

*(Kafka: "The Silence of the Sirens" (October 1917))*

### **Index pictures:**

<http://www.archive.org/details/photographingino00adam>

<http://www.archive.org/details/pictoriallandsca00anderich>

### **Outlook:**

Interviews

Essays

A greater variety in terms of the reviews (from more countries)

A lot of old pictures

And maybe even some fancy design

And what else comes to my mind